

Prince of Ayodhya - Book One: The Ramayana

By Ashok K. Banker

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Embodying all the elements of a classic epic fantasy, the ancient Hindu mythological tale The Ramayana is full of sweeping adventure, gods and monsters, and a questing prince. Now, author Ashok K. Banker adapts The Ramayana into an impressive epic fantasy. The hero of the first book is young Rama, heir to the throne of Ayodhya. When two powerful rakshasa-demons who have raised a formidable army of anti-gods-plan to take over the land of humans as well, the legendary seer-mage Vishwamitra is forced out of a 240-year-long retreat to call upon Rama for his help in the eternal battle of Good against Evil.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly
This retelling of the ancient Hindu classic, The Ramayana, marking Indian author Banker's U.S. debut, makes an odd but compelling book. Many untranslated words and phrases mix with occasional modern terms, but Banker usually just lushly embellishes the classic tale of a war between absolute Good and Evil. Teenaged prince Rama is everything a culture hero should be, incredibly fit, skilled and pious. He's given the responsibility of saving not just his native city, glorious Ayodhya, but the whole of humanity from the schemes of an army of demons and their allies. And so, with the mighty seer-mage Vishwamitra and his only relatively less heroic half-brother, Laskshman, Rama sets out on a heroic journey. At first, readers will notice the intensity of every scene and the absence of any inner life for characters who, whether gloriously wonderful or noxiously monstrous, don't so much converse as make melodramatic speeches at each other. But then you realize how easy it is to turn the pages. It's a ripping good yarn, though Banker lacks Tolkien's knack for varying tone to avoid monotony. Nor is he interested in rationalizing myth into subtle, ironic SF, as Roger Zelazny did in Lord of Light. In its approach to storytelling, this novel resembles E.E. "Doc" Smith's clumsy but rousing Lensmen saga, showing how gusto and a vivid imagination can spruce up very old themes.
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About the Author
Ashok K. Banker lives in Bombay, India.

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